IN SUMMARY

Reaction to Reform
A majority of the nation's teachers report that they were not consulted in reforms enacted by their states and that those reforms do not reflect their views, according to a new poll. **Story on Page 6.**

A Boycott Based on Fear
Following a decision by New York City officials to allow a 2nd grader with AIDS to continue attending school, parents of 12,000 pupils kept their children home on the first day of classes. **Story on Page 8.**

Strikes and Settlements (Cont.)
Pontiac, Mich., teachers returned to school without a contract; strikes continued elsewhere in Michigan, in Seattle, and in Rhode Island; and a walkout was averted at the 11th hour in Buffalo. **Story on Page 8.**

Thumbs Down on Exit Test
An advisory panel to the Connecticut Board of Education—arguing that a high-school exit test would lead to a "narrowing" of the curriculum—has advised against it. **Story on Page 9.**

New Directions for Research
In a first step toward designing a new research agenda, the National Center for Education Statistics has gathered hundreds of suggestions from prominent researchers and organizations. **Story on Page 10.**

A Red-Letter Day
School officials around the country were pleased to hear from the Education Department that their districts had qualified for multi-million-dollar grants for magnet schools. **Story on Page 11.**

Commentary	24	Letters	16
Databank	4	Marketplace	21
Events	19	New in Print	17
For the Record	11	Publishing Column	16

FORUM
"Tracking the Reforms, Part 7: A Longer School Year—A Reform Rebuff?," Education Commission of the States
Statement on Page 18.

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THE WEEK

FEDERAL

Two House Bills Address Issue Of Youth Suicide

The federal government must use its resources to help stem the "alarming" rise in youth suicides, legislators and health experts told a House committee last week.

Witnesses testified before the House Education and Labor Committee on two bills, both aimed at informing the public about youth suicide and supplementing community and school suicide-prevention efforts.

About 6,000 young people between the ages of 15 and 24 committed suicide last year, according to national health statistics.

A bill (H R 1099) introduced by Representative Gary Ackerman, Democrat of New York, would authorize $10 million annually over a three-year period to help local education agencies design, organize, and operate suicide-prevention programs. No group or school board could receive more than $100,000 a year.

The second bill, H R 1894, introduced by Representative Tom Lantos, Democrat of California, would establish a national commission for the study of youth suicide and set up a program of grants for suicide-prevention programs to be administered by the Department of Health and Human Services. The bill calls for a total allocation of $31.5 million over three years.

Senate Hearings Begin on Renewing College-Aid Act

Senate hearings began last week on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as the Education, Arts, and Humanities Subcommittee heard testimony from college presidents and from students and parents who have benefited from federal aid.

In an opening statement, the subcommittee chairman, Senator Robert T. Stafford, Republican of Vermont, said the twin aims of the federal government should be "access and choice" in higher education. In a recent newspaper interview, however, Undersecretary of Education Gary L. Bauer said federal programs should promote "access" but not necessarily "choice."

Senator Stafford has previously sparred over higher-education funding with Secretary of Education William J. Bennett, who has advocated deep cuts in the program. Mr. Bennett is expected to unveil his plan for new higher-education legislation—which is now being reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget—in testimony before the subcommittee next month.

Meanwhile, the House Postsecondary Education Subcommittee continues its hearings on the legislation—which will expire next September—and is expected to begin drafting a bill in coming weeks.

NATIONAL

Poll Finds Belief in Children's Accounts Of Sexual Abuse

Most Americans believe that children's descriptions of sexual abuse are credible, according to a nationwide poll conducted by the *Los Angeles Times*.

Seventy-nine percent of the poll's 2,627 respondents said they were "certain" that children under age 13 are capable of providing accurate accounts of abuse, even when the incidents recounted took place several years earlier.

The 100-question telephone survey, conducted last month, also provided, according to the newspaper, the first comprehensive picture of the extent of child abuse across the nation.

Among the findings:

- At least 22 percent of the respondents said they had been molested as children. Some 86 percent of those who had been molested said the public should believe children's accounts of abuse.
- Almost three-fourths of those surveyed by the newspaper approved of fingerprint checks and licenses for people who work with children; 43 percent recommended heavier punishment for offenders; and 41 percent suggested more public attention should be devoted to the problem. More than 60 percent of the respondents said current laws are inadequate.
- Most respondents said they favored long prison sentences for child abusers; 10 percent said the death penalty is appropriate.
- Although those polled overestimated the reported incidence of child sexual abuse in the country, they tended to think such crimes were not serious problems in their own communities.

STATES

Six-Hour Day Is Standard for Many Wisconsin Schools

A substantial portion of Wisconsin's public schools already comply with a recently passed state law requiring a minimum six-hour day, according to a survey by the Wisconsin Association of School Boards completed last month.

Ninety-eight percent of the 216 school-board presidents surveyed—representing about half of the school boards in the state—said their districts are already in compliance with the law, which will not go into effect until 1988.

The new law, passed in July, requires a six-hour school day (excluding lunch) for elementary schools and six and one-half hours for high schools.

The survey also found that 48 percent of the state's districts have a program to address the dropout problem and 24 percent have dropped or are considering dropping vocational-education courses from their curriculum.

Thirty-five percent of the board presidents said that complying with a new state law mandating the implementation of tougher high-school graduation standards has increased costs for their district.

N.C. To Study 'Optimal' Number Of School Systems

The North Carolina Board of Education has called for a study to determine the "optimal" number of public-school systems for the state. But some critics have vowed to oppose any legislation that would remove decisionmaking power from local districts.

"We have welcomed the study," said Eugene E. Causby, executive director of the North Carolina School Boards Association. "At the same time, we have reiterated our strong belief that school organization should remain, as it currently is, a local decision."

North Carolina has 100 counties and 141 local school systems, said Howard Maniloff, special assistant to the state superintendent of education. "There's been some interest in the legislature for several years in looking at whether we should have simply 100 county school systems in order to save money," he said.

The board noted in its resolution, which passed unanimously, that it has a responsibility to find the most "cost-efficient and effective" method of providing education to North Carolina's children, particularly in light of the state's new comprehensive school-reform law. The measure is expected to cost the state more than $200 million in the next two years and to take eight years to implement fully.

The study, to be presented to the board in March, most likely will result in an attempt in the next legis-

With 12, You Get Eggrolls?

Jane, June, and Janice Hruska, identical triplets from Ulysses, Neb., recently enrolled as freshmen at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, making them the 10th, 11th, and 12th children from their family to attend college. Rita Marie, the 13th child, plans to enter the university next year.

Continued from Preceding Page
that public schools provide an adequate education, asserts Gershon M. Ratner, a lawyer with the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"[The] recognition of the right to adequate education would directly improve the quality of education in basic skills, the most important objective of public education," writes Mr. Ratner, who previously worked in the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. He cites as precedents school-finance suits in West Virginia (*Pauley* v. *West Virginia*) and Washington State (*Seattle School District No. 1* v. *State*).

Mr. Ratner argues that advances in effective-schools research—and examples of effective schools with large numbers of poor and minority children—make it possible to sue schools that have not embraced the principles of an effective school. He lists these principles common to effective schools: a strong principal, a clear instructional focus, an orderly environment, well-defined expectations for students, and frequent testing to gauge student achievement.

He rejects arguments that the cost of implementing these principles would be prohibitive and that suits against schools would lead to damage claims; instead, he argues, courts need order only "equitable remedies," not damages.

PEOPLE

The Cleveland Board of Education has voted unanimously to select **Ronald A. Boyd** as superintendent of the city's 75,000-student system.

The 44-year-old Mr. Boyd, whose negotiated contract was expected to be approved by the board late last week, replaces Frederick D. Holliday, the city's first black school superintendent, who committed suicide last January.

Mr. Boyd, who is also black, is expected to start work in early October. He is leaving a job with the 27,000-student Compton (Calif.) Unified School District, where he has served as deputy superintendent.

□

Senator Mark Hatfield, Republican of Oregon, has said that to ensure stable funding for education in his home state he will vote for a state sales tax appearing on the ballot in Oregon elections this week.

Senator Hatfield, the state's senior senator, has long opposed such a tax, but recently told Gov. Victor G. Atiyeh that his concern for education supersedes his opposition.

State lawmakers this summer referred the sales-tax proposal to voters; it is scheduled to appear on the Sept. 17 ballot and has the Governor's strong support.

The sales tax, if approved, would be the state's first and would provide as much as $700 million annually for elementary and secondary education.

□

Marilyn Russell Bittle, president of the California Teachers Association, an affiliate of the National Education Association, declined to attend a breakfast meeting with U. S. Secretary of Education William J. Bennett hosted earlier this month by the San Jose Board of Education. Mr. Bennett was in San Jose as part of his teaching trips to schools in eight cities this month.

Ms. Bittle refused the invitation as a way of showing her support for the San Jose Teachers Association, a C.T.A. affiliate now engaged in a contract dispute with the board, according to Denise M. Holt, a C.T.A. spokesman. The C.T.A. local picketed the meeting, she said.

Ms. Holt said local union officials had "taken offense" over a statement attributed to Loye W. Miller, Mr. Bennett's press secretary. Mr. Miller reportedly said that San Jose had been selected for the visit because of its "success in turning around a district torn by employee unrest and financial disaster."

"The truth of the matter," said Ms. Bittle, "is that labor relations with teachers in that district have deteriorated significantly."

□

H. Ross Perot, the Texas computer magnate who led that state's assertive school-reform commission, will be honored by the Winston Churchill Foundation of the United States, the group announced earlier this month.

The Winston Churchill Award, which Mr. Perot will receive next February, is given periodically to individuals who embody such Churchillian traits as "boldness, vigor, imagination, and courage," said John L. Loeb, president of the group.

Mr. Perot, who founded and is the chairman of Electronic Data Systems Corporation, organized and participated in a 1979 mission to rescue two of his employees held captive in Iran. Earlier, he had underwritten a plan to free American prisoners in Vietnam.

UPDATE

The parents of 11 students at the 68th Street School in Los Angeles have filed a $110-million claim against the Los Angeles Unified School District, charging officials with negligent hiring and retention, conspiracy, and intentional infliction of emotional distress in connection with a child-abuse case.

The claim is in response to allegations that school and district officials waited as long as a year before reporting to the appropriate authorities that they suspected a teacher at the school—Terry E. Bartholome—of molesting a number of his 3rd-grade students. (*See Education Week, Aug. 21, 1985.*)

Mr. Bartholome, who has pleaded not guilty to 30 felony counts and 15 misdemeanor counts, is being held on $200,000 bail. A pretrial hearing has been set for Sept. 19.

The school district has until Oct. 7 to review the claim and make a decision on what action to take, according to Eric G. Ferrer, a lawyer in the firm of Johnnie L. Cochran Jr., which is representing the parents. If the claim is rejected, Mr. Ferrer said, the parents will file suit.

Jerry Halverson, associate superintendent and general counsel for the district, said officials plan to reject the claim and will determine whether to negotiate or defend the suit once investigations by the grand jury and the school district are completed.

DATABANK

A Tally of Public Schools

The number of public schools nationwide declined slightly between fall 1982 and fall 1983, the National Center for Education Statistics reports. The net decrease amounted to 553 schools, or less than 1 percent.

Change in Number of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, by Type

Type of School	Number of Schools		Difference	
	Fall 1982	Fall 1983	Number	Percent
Total	84,740	84,187	-553	-0.7
Regular	81,279	80,658	-621	-0.8
Special education	2,076	1,996	-80	-3.9
Vocational/technical	1,117	1,187	70	6.3
Other	268	346	78	29.1

Change in Number of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, by Grade Span

Grade Span Range	Number of Schools		Difference	
	Fall 1982	Fall 1983	Number	Percent
Total	84,740	84,187	-553	-0.7
Grade span range Pk-8	60,827	60,273	-554	-0.9
Grade span range 9-12	12,076	12,070	-6	(*)
Grade span range with low grade in Pk-8 and high grade in 9-12	9,136	9,094	-42	-0.5
Ungraded	2,701	2,750	49	1.8

*Less than 0.05 percent.

Change in Number of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, by State

State	Number of Schools		Difference	
	Fall 1982	Fall 1983	Number	Percent
Total	84,740	84,187	-553	-0.7
Alabama	1,347	1,359	12	0.9
Alaska	407	431	24	5.9
Arizona	889	878	-11	-1.2
Arkansas	1,180	1,172	-8	-0.7
California	7,403	7,403	0	0
Colorado	1,276	1,281	5	0.4
Connecticut	981	965	-16	-1.6
Delaware	160	163	3	1.9
District of Columbia	180	180	0	0
Florida	2,202	2,266	64	2.9
Georgia	1,778	1,777	-1	-0.1
Hawaii	232	231	-1	-0.4
Idaho	592	591	-1	-0.2
Illinois	4,450	4,360	-90	-2.0
Indiana	2,088	1,953	-135	-6.5
Iowa	1,743	1,721	-22	-1.3
Kansas	1,518	1,494	-24	-1.6
Kentucky	1,383	1,377	-6	-0.4
Louisiana	1,518	1,497	-21	-1.4
Maine	749	757	8	1.1
Maryland	1,265	1,226	-39	-3.1
Massachusetts	1,860	1,827	-33	-1.8
Michigan	3,804	3,804	0	0
Minnesota	1,695	1,675	-20	-1.2
Mississippi	889	887	-2	-0.2
Missouri	2,165	2,159	-6	-0.3
Montana	785	778	-7	-0.9
Nebraska	1,699	1,675	-24	-1.4
Nevada	296	296	0	0
New Hampshire	440	440	0	0
New Jersey	2,318	2,289	-29	-1.3
New Mexico	635	639	4	0.6
New York	3,976	3,962	-14	-0.4
North Carolina	2,012	1,994	-18	-0.9
North Dakota	663	663	0	0
Ohio	3,846	3,801	-45	-1.2
Oklahoma	1,865	1,876	11	0.6
Oregon	1,273	1,250	-23	-1.8
Pennsylvania	3,507	3,427	-80	-2.3
Rhode Island	289	283	-6	-2.1
South Carolina	1,132	1,127	-5	-0.4
South Dakota	709	735	26	3.7
Tennessee	1,725	1,700	-25	-1.4
Texas	5,645	5,699	54	1.0
Utah	701	683	-18	-2.6
Vermont	378	380	2	0.5
Virginia	1,816	1,814	-2	-0.1
Washington	1,723	1,706	-17	-1.0
West Virginia	1,128	1,118	-10	-0.9
Wisconsin	2,050	2,035	-15	-0.7
Wyoming	375	383	8	2.1

Source: National Center for Education Statistics